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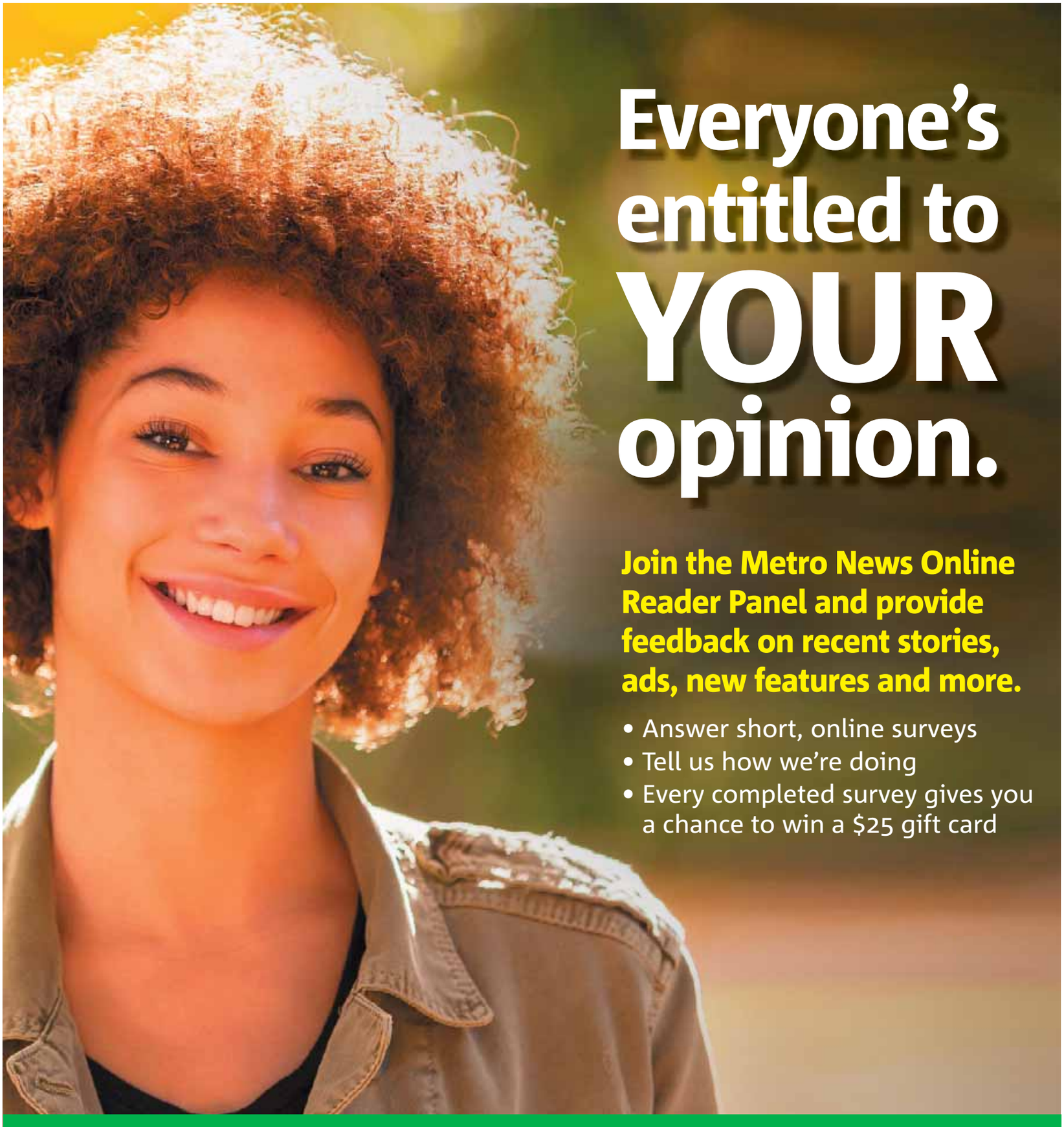
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HIGH HOPES

WILLIE NELSON ROLLS OUT HIS OWN BRAND OF POT AS 10,000 GATHER DOWNTOWN TO PUSH FOR LEGALIZATION

LIFE

TORONTO NEWS

Toronto metro

Your essential daily news | TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2015

YOU CAN'T BUY JUST TWO EGGS
LIVING BELOW THE LINE

High 9°C/Low 4°C Rain, rain, rain

LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

Toronto ranked Canada's second-most miserable city (Vancouver beat us)

TORONTO NEWS

Youth speak up about new chief

POLICE

Group hopeful next leader will give 'more voice' to young people

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

If Toronto's next police chief wants to show critics he's serious about reform, he can start by reaching out to young people, local youth advocates said Monday.

It was announced Monday that Deputy Chief Mark Saunders will replace Bill Blair, whose last day is Saturday.

Kevin Vuong, a member of the Toronto Youth Cabinet, told Metro he's excited to work with Saunders.

Mark Saunders, soon to be the police chief. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

"I'm optimistic he'll continue to focus on community engagement like Chief Blair," he said, "and I'm optimistic he'll give youth more voice."

The youth cabinet polled young people in the city, asking what qualities they wanted in a chief. Many wanted the next one to be more socially progressive and a person of colour.

Saunders will become the city's first black police chief. However, he was widely considered the establishment candidate, leading some to question his progressive credentials.

Re-establishing the police chief's youth advisory committee, dissolved under Blair's tenure, would "go a long way towards proving (Saunders') critics wrong," Vuong said.

One of the reasons Vuong is confident about Saunders is his use of social media. Unlike Blair, Saunders is active on Twitter, frequently posting about himself or his family and uploading pictures of police dogs.

"If he's open to more current methods of communication, it makes me hopeful he'll be open to adopting new ideas or reforms," Vuong said.

Four things to know about Saunders, page 6

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

A sweater was donated to the Edmonton Zoo's elephant, but she never got it.

City tax system is unfair: Prof

CITY HALL

New system could generate more revenue

Jessica Smith Cross
Metro | Toronto

A Torontonian who owns a mansion on the Bridle Path pays the same property tax rate as someone who owns, or rents, a tiny bungalow in Scarborough — and one municipal tax expert says for Toronto to be a fair city, that needs to change.

Myer Siemiatycki, a politics professor at Ryerson University, said Metro's ward-by-ward breakdown of property tax payments prompts critical questions about distribution of the property-tax burden in Toronto. The breakdown shows the ward paying the most is pumping 10 times more tax, commercial and residential combined, into city coffers than the lowest-paying ward.

When it comes to residential taxes, people in the richest areas — where the property values are highest — already pay the lion's share. Siemiatycki argues those wealthy homeowners can and should be paying even more.

Property taxes are regressive because people with lower incomes spend a higher proportion of their incomes on property taxes than those who are wealthy even though their homes have lower value. But, a progressive tax structure — which means a higher tax rate for those who can afford to pay it — has been a foundational principle of taxation in Canada since the introduction of the income tax, he said.

"We take as a given, when it comes to something like the income tax, that the higher your income is, not only should you pay more tax, but you should also pay at a higher rate of taxation," he said.

Toronto can't change to progressive taxes without a change in provincial legislation. It's something that needs to happen, Siemiatycki says.

He suggests that homeowners pay a higher rate of taxation on any value of their home over a certain threshold. If the threshold is set at $700,000, for example, a person with a home valued at $800,000 would pay a higher rate on the extra $100,000.

"And anyone lucky enough own a home over $1.5 million is going to be pay an even higher rate for that higher incremental value over $1.5 million," he said. "That would get us to fairness among individual taxpayers."

That change would help the city pay for things it needs that the current property tax system isn't adequately funding, such as transit, Gardiner Expressway repairs and affordable housing, he said.

This map indicates the average property tax paid by households in each ward. Wards where households pay more property tax on average, because the residential real estate values are higher, are shown in darker green. JESSICA SMITH CROSS/METRO

TRAFFIC CONGESTION SEE YA, SCRAMBLE! A woman uses her cellphone at the corner of Bay and Bloor streets Monday. Despite outcry from pedestrian advocates, the city removed an all-way scramble from the intersection over the weekend, citing comparatively low usage and excessive delays for vehicles. REDDIT/NOOOOOOOOOOBODY

IN BRIEF

Local mayors join fight to stop CN rail facility

Five GTA municipalities are taking action to stop Canadian National Railway from building a 400-acre rail and truck distribution centre in south Milton.

A joint statement released Friday from all the Halton municipalities highlights issues they have with the proposal CN submitted for approval to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, the body that will analyze and possibly approve CN's plan.

The statement says: "CN has provided incomplete information; CN has improperly narrowed the scope of relevant environmental effects; CN has failed to identify all possible federal approvals; and CN has not demonstrated how this project is exempt from the Canada Transportation Act railway line approval process."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

H&M bringing new clothing line to Toronto

A contemporary clothing brand owned by the same group that operates H&M is coming to Canada.

COS — short for Collection Of Style — has announced plans to open its first Canadian stores in the coming fall and winter.

The first COS store will be a three-floor location at 85 Bloor St. in Toronto.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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HOUSE FIRE

Family critically injured

A man, woman and young boy are in life-threatening condition after a fire erupted at a North York apartment Sunday night.

Emergency services were called out to the highrise building on Jane St. between Finch Ave. W. and Sheppard Ave. W. around 11:40 p.m. Sunday.

The second-floor fire quickly escalated to a three-alarm response as firefighters, police and paramedics worked to rescue residents from the balconies.

A man and woman, both about 35, and a three-year-old boy, were found unconscious in the west stairwell of the Jane St. apartment building, according to Toronto police.

Police have since confirmed the fire is not believed to be suspicious. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ELECTRICITY

Energy bills set to double

Ontarians will soon be paying more than twice as much for electricity during peak demand periods than off-peak times.

Starting May 1, the price for peak periods — weekdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. — will be 16.1 cents per kilowatt hour, compared with 8 cents for off-peak hours on weekdays from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., and all day on weekends and holidays.

The mid-peak rate of 12.2 cents a kilowatt hour will apply weekdays from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Ontario Energy Board estimates the change will add $5.71 to the average household electricity bill. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A house in Scarborough was completed destroyed Monday, and neighbouring homes suffered significant damage, after an explosion at about 4 p.m. in a community near Brimley Road and Steeles Avenue East. CHRIS SO/TORONTO STAR

Explosion levels house

SCARBOROUGH

Blast kills man in 50s, and damages at least 17 homes

A massive pile of drywall and wood sat in the place of a Scarborough home Monday evening after an explosion ripped apart the house, claiming the life of a man in his 50s.

Neighbours gathered close to the 3356 Brimley Rd. home that police said had been "totally flattened." As they gawked at shreds of paper that floated through the air and pinched their noses to complain about the smell of gas, they snapped photos of a coating of fluffy yellow insulation that had erupted with the explosion, covering nearby homes, trees and cars.

Jocelyn Lawrence, a woman living a street over from the scene, said she had just arrived home from a long trip to Nashville when she heard a "loud boom."

"It shook the entire house," she said, of the blast occurring just before 4:30 p.m. "I couldn't believe it. Everything was rocking."

Another local, Myrtle Cupid, heard the blast and first thought it was car that had slammed into her garage.

> **"All of a sudden we heard this shake, like the house was almost off the foundation. It was that powerful."**
> Myrtle Cupid

"We were in the kitchen of the house and all of a sudden we heard this shake, like the house was almost off the foundation. It was that powerful," Cupid said.

She and Lawrence said they both ran outside where crowds of neighbours had gathered along the usually quiet, residential street.

Within minutes more than a dozen police cars, five fire trucks and a few ambulances had arrived at the property. Police quickly cordoned off the Brimley Road block just south of Steeles Avenue East and began evacuating neighbours to the homes of friends and family living outside the police tape.

They treated one woman for minor injuries to her hand and pulled one man without vital signs from the debris, pronouncing him dead on the scene. Police identified the man to Torstar News Service as Paul Zigomanis.

Capt. Adrian Ratushniak of Toronto Fire Services said the area was evacuated because of a natural gas leak surrounding the neighbourhood of the home that was "totally flattened" by the blast.

He noted that at least 17 adjacent houses were damaged by the explosion, which left vertical blinds hanging from nearby trees and neighbours scratching their heads as to what exactly happened.

The answer to that conundrum will come as police continue their investigation. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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EDUCATION

Students 'used as political pawns' in strike

Student trustees across Ontario are urging all sides — the government, the high school teachers' union and school boards' association — to stop using teens as "political pawns" and end the strike in Durham as well as the threat of further job action across the province.

Trevor Sookraj of the Ontario Student Trustees' Association said students were caught in the middle during the last labour disruption in 2012 and 2013 and "that left us powerless ... in the middle of playground battles" between the adults.

While "students being used as political pawns" is not new, he said, "we are not very impressed with either side."

The association, which represents student trustees who sit on public and Catholic school boards but have no voting rights, is now trying to "bridge the gap" and has set up meetings with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation on Wednesday, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association on Thursday and the education ministry in early May.

This time around, new legislation mandates a two-tiered approach to bargaining, where big-cost items such as salary and sick leave are negotiated at provincial bargaining tables, and local specifics such as teacher transfers or unpaid leaves are bargained between individual school boards and the union districts.

While Durham teachers hit the picket lines Monday after failing to reach a local deal with the Durham District School Board in time, the provincial branch of the union returned to talks with the government and school boards' association.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Think pet licences are a cash grab? Give your head a shake.

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Three-year-old twins Binh, left, and Phuoc have both undergone surgery successfully to overcome a genetic disease. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Second twin gets her liver

HEALTH

Binh Wagner doing well following transplant

Phuoc came home from hospital and was growing fast, shocking her parents with unprecedented appetite and energy. Just weeks after her adopted dad Michael Wagner donated a portion of his liver to her in a potentially life-saving transplant operation, the little girl was at home in Kingston — doing somersaults.

At first it pained her mother to see Phuoc getting better while her sister Binh was still waiting for her own surgery. The three-year-old twins both needed liver transplants because of a rare genetic disorder.

Now, more than two months after Phuoc's transplant surgery, her twin sister has finally followed suit with her own operation. The family announced Monday that Binh's surgery was successful and that she is recovering well. She received a new liver from an anonymous donor sometime "within the past month," according to a hospital release.

Binh and Phuoc, who were born in Vietnam, have Alagille syndrome, a condition that disrupts bile ducts in the liver and leads to a series of complications like jaundice, chronic itchiness, and stunted growth.

Like Phuoc and Michael's surgeries, Binh's transplant operation was carried out at Sick Kids and Toronto General. Doctors there determined in February that the twins' father should donate his liver to Phuoc, because her condition was more advanced than Binh's. After the well publicized father-daughter first surgery, hundreds of people applied to Toronto General Hospital, home of the country's largest liver transplant program, to be Binh's donor.

> **"There are not enough words to thank the amazing and so unselfish donor.**
> Family statement

A statement posted on the Wagner family's Facebook page Monday asked for privacy and urged readers not to try and find out the identity of Binh's organ donor.

"There are not enough words to thank the amazing and so unselfish donor," the statement says.

"Binh is recovering well, at her own pace. She has been through a lot with very different medical issues from her twin who had her transplant two months ago. We are looking forward to all being reunited and leading a healthier life now, with both transplants finally behind us."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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4 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MARK SAUNDERS

Toronto's 48-year-old police chief designate is a 32-year police veteran of Jamaican heritage. He's currently a deputy chief, and was appointed unanimously by a seven-member board. He's now in charge of Specialized Operations Command, where he oversees 1,200 police officers, 164 civilian members and a budget of $175 million.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 He only recently got his degree, studying part-time

Saunders just completed a bachelor of applied arts degree in justice studies at Guelph-Humber.

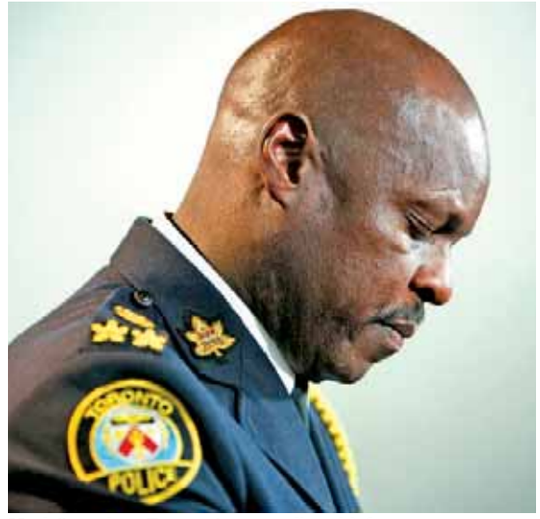
He began studying part-time three years ago, taking evening, weekend and online classes in the adult education stream — at the same time he was deputy chief of Specialized Operations Command.

Gary Ellis, head of Guelph-Humber's Justice Studies program and a former TPS superintendent, said Saunders recently took the time to speak to younger students in the program, on his own volition. "He's a busy guy, so it meant a lot to them."

2 He changed the way homicides are investigated

Among the roles Saunders has filled within the police force was heading its homicide squad from 2010-2012. Colleagues credit him for implementing a new, more effective way of investigating homicides — a system still in place today.

Called "front-ending" or "front-loading," the tactic involves a team, rather than one or two detectives, arriving on the crime scene and working on the case within its first 48-72 hours. The investigative system was a recommendation in the Justice Archie G. Campbell review — an examination of police investigations in the wake of Paul Bernardo murders — and aimed to improve homicide solvency rates.



Mark Saunders, Toronto's next police chief. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

3 He's been 'the first black' before

On Monday, Saunders acknowledged the importance of becoming the first black chief of the force. "If it offers any hope to anybody that is a person of colour," he said, "then I'm glad that it does."

But colleagues note Saunders has been breaking barriers as a black officer throughout his career. In 2010, he became the force's first black officer to lead the homicide unit. Before that, he was the first black sergeant with the elite Emergency Task Force unit.

Ellis, who led the homicide squad when Saunders was a detective, said he was at that time the only black officer in the unit, and had quietly been a leader simply by excelling in the job.

4 He initiated the force's specialized cyber unit

As deputy chief, Saunders developed an investigative cybercrime unit, known as C3, to ensure the force was maximizing its use of policing technology, and stayed aware of how the service could be vulnerable to cyber attack.

"He established the cyber crime area of the service, and I might say that we're one of the leading agencies in the country doing that," said Staff Superintendent Jim Ramer, unit commander of Detective Operations. Toronto Police Insp. Shawna Coxon, who was on the team establishing C3, said Saunders' work on the project demonstrated an ability make difficult changes.

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Now's the perfect time for drivers to compare rates

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Survey says T.O. an unhappy city

STATISTICS CANADA

Report says more about people than city: Professor

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

A report from Statistics Canada is the latest to show Toronto is an unhappy place.

On average, Toronto residents ranked their life satisfaction a 7.8 out of 10. Only those living in Vancouver were less happy about their circumstances.

The results mirror those of numerous other studies, including ones conducted recently by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards in Ottawa and tech start-up Jetpac.

So if Toronto is such a gloomy place, why do people from across Canada — and the world — continue to flock here?

"Everyone has a different way of pursuing happiness," said University of Toronto psychology professor Ulrich Schimmack.

"I think that's actually a plus for Toronto; there's just so many ways to live your life here."

According to Schimmack, large cities often score lower than smaller ones in happiness studies.

For example, StatsCan found the most satisfied cities were St. John's, N.L., Trois-Rivières, Que., and Saguenay, Que.

Schimmack believes that says less about the cities themselves and more about the people who live in them.

"Places with the greatest amount of opportunity attract people who are unhappy where they are and looking for some improvement," he said.

> **Higher aspirations, kind of by definition, predispose you to unhappiness.**
> Ulrich Schimmack

"And those higher aspirations, kind of by definition, predispose you to unhappiness."

However, Schimmack noted certain things about Toronto, particularly income inequality and traffic congestion, could explain why it's a less happy city.

"A number of studies have shown that commuting is the unhappiest moment in people's lives," he said. "And just look at the traffic in Toronto."

WEATHER HARD RAIN'S A-GONNA FALL People in downtown Toronto were left running for shelter as heavy rains moved through Monday afternoon. Expect more of the same in coming days, with Environment Canada calling for showers through Thursday. Highs will hover at about 6 C — far below the norm of 13 C for this time of year. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

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World Vision

It's all or nothing for egg shoppers on a budget

CHALLENGE DAY 1

Reporter tries, fails to buy two eggs instead of whole carton

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

I couldn't buy a couple of eggs.

I grew up in Rwanda, and I still remember young men and women walking through downtown streets — and other parts of the country — with baskets, selling all sorts of food items. An egg would go for less than 20 cents. It would be about the same price as buying the egg in a restaurant or at a food store. Whether your budget allowed for one, two, three or the entire pack, you'd have a choice.

After embracing the challenge to live on $1.75 a day, I realized that in downtown Toronto, things were different. I'd set out on a shopping spree with my tiny budget and had hoped to get at least two eggs for less than a dollar, something I thought should be easy enough.

But no store would allow me to buy just two eggs — not a single store among a handful that I visited. A couple of stores had two or three boiled eggs already packaged, but the price was way outside what I could afford on my budget.

As I was pounding the streets looking for eggs, I kept thinking about the poor person, with just a few spare cents, looking for an egg or two but constantly being told to buy the whole carton.

Yes, a dozen eggs sell for about $4, and that's about 33 cents for each. But if you're among Toronto's poor, unless you have access to a farmers' market, your choices on a tight budget are limited. And it's not as if the city is free of poor people. We just learned, in fact, that 264,000 adults here are living on poverty-level wages, according to the latest Metcalf Foundation report.

It may not be surprising to see someone buying just a bottle of cooking oil, one jar of juice or a single bun from the bakery section. I've never really thought that it might be all they can afford. I'm more likely to assume they're just picking up one single item missing from the fridge.

Now that I've been that person buying three tomatoes, a handful of mushrooms, a can of beans and asking for only two eggs, I have a different perspective.

I knew I was doing this as an exercise. When I try to imagine a person living in real poverty and totally bound by a tight budget, it makes me sad. That person has very little choice in how they live and has even less choice in the food they eat.

LIVING BELOW THE LINE

The reporter: Gilbert Ngabo works for Metro in Toronto. He moved to Canada from Rwanda five years ago.

The mission: To live on just $1.75 a day for five days — a challenge made to all Canadians by the Global Poverty Project, which says that's the daily budget of those who live below the poverty line.

The series: Day 1 of 5, Gilbert tries and fails to buy a couple of eggs. Not six, not a dozen. Two.

Follow Gilbert Ngabo on Twitter @dugilbo or at metronews.ca.

Gilbert Ngabo tries his luck at finding two eggs at Loblaws at Queen's Quay and Lower Jarvis in Toronto on Monday. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

No store would sell two eggs to Gilbert Ngabo. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

> **A couple of stores had two or three boiled eggs already packaged, but the price was way outside what I could afford on my budget.**

Struck out again at a Shoppers Drug Mart. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

GROCERIES

Egg search, store by store

I set off Monday to try to find two eggs. The results were as follows:

— An employee at a Shoppers Drug Mart looked at me incredulously before saying there was no way I could be given just two separate eggs.

— A Metro store had a six-pack of eggs for $2.99, but my budget would only allow for two eggs under a loonie, combined. A staff member told me she had never seen anyone trying to buy just a few eggs. They did have a packet with two boiled eggs, but it would have cost $1.12.

— It was the same story at Loblaws, where a pair of boiled eggs goes for a little less than a toonie.

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TOYOTA

EBAY

Ford's tie fails to sell

He must have bid on it in one of his drunken stupors.

A necktie worn by former Mayor Rob Ford has found its way back to eBay after original auction winner failed to cough up the dough.

The tie — worn by Ford when he admitted to smoking crack cocaine — first arrived on the auction block last month. The piece of mayoral memorabilia received over 100 bids, with the winning bid coming in at $16,100.

However, the tie reappeared on eBay last week, alongside other formerly auctioned items, including a Saskatchewan Roughriders Jersey and a pair of sweatpants worn by Ford.

Each of the new postings notes "this item is being listed due to fraudulent activity of the original winning bidder."

Ford, who is scheduled to undergo surgery to remove a tumour from his abdomen next month, has been selling items from his scandal-plagued tenure on eBay since March. He claims a portion of the proceeds will be given to an as yet unnamed charity.

News of the failed necktie bid thrilled Ryan Creighton, who auctioned off his own tie to protest what he saw as Ford capitalizing on his indiscretions.

Creighton's tie sold for $55, all of which was donated to CAMH.

"I would like the record to show that my tie auction raised more money for charity than Ford's," he told Metro in an email Monday.

At press time, the second round of bidding on Ford's tie had reached $780. The auction is scheduled to close Tuesday at 10 a.m.

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO

Prescription for revival

ARCHITECTURE

Historic cinema preserved as Shoppers Drug Mart outlet

The historic Runnymede Theatre on Bloor St. W. has been a movie house, a bingo hall, a bookstore, and now it is a Shoppers Drug Mart.

Customers lined up last week to be the first to judge whether or not the big box pharmacy chain — now a part of the Loblaws family empire — had preserved not just the walls and ceiling of the community's beloved Runnymede, but the feel and ambience of the theatre, built in 1927.

"I think Shoppers Drug Mart did a beautiful job. The old movie theatre is much more visible and evident. It's cleaned up, fresh and airier. It's all very pretty. I think they've pumped it up," said resident John Attard, 59, a speech language pathologist, who dropped by the store for the first time on Monday.

The Shoppers Drug Mart opened for business on Thursday with a grand opening on Saturday, said pharmacy owner Manjit Hansra. The company hired people to dress as movie ushers and give out candy and coupons.

The main auditorium projects historical images as shoppers go through the cosmetics area.
RICHARD LAUTENS/TORONTO STAR

> **"It's nice to see a big box store like this make the effort; respect what was here.**
> Local resident John Attard

Hansra, 36, who owned the Shoppers for six years when it was located down the street, said he felt the pressure of the community to do the space justice. He was relieved when he saw the looks on the faces of the first customers through the doors.

The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive and Hansra believes the store will be an anchor and a draw for businesses located along Bloor Street West.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RALLY MARIJUANA ACTIVISTS GATHER FOR 4/20 AT DUNDAS SQUARE Despite an afternoon downpour, an estimated 10,000 people packed Yonge-Dundas Square on Monday to smoke marijuana during Toronto's annual 4/20 rally. In the world of marijuana, 4/20 is code that refers to smoking the herb. April 20 (that was yesterday, in case you forgot) has long been the day when weed is celebrated and people advocate for it to be legalized. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

SCARBOROUGH

Communities support family ties to reduce youth crime

Five communities in Scarborough are the target of a new program that seeks to curb youth criminal involvement.

Our House Your House, a project that is run by the East Metro Youth Services, was recently launched to strengthen youth — aged 12 to 16 — relationships with their families in high-priority neighbourhoods.

"Most of them are kids who get in trouble at school, have some behavioural issues at home, you know, medium to high risk youth who might get into criminal activities," said Erin Physick, the project coordinator.

These families are identified through a partnership with police, community housing and other outreach networks, she said.

The project, which recently got $1.8 million funding from federal government for its five-year plan, will strive to help both families and at-risk youth to live better in society and avoid any run-ins with the law, she added.

"We are trying to build stronger family togetherness and cohesion," she said. "If there's less conflict at home, perhaps you are less likely getting in trouble outside."

The neighbourhoods where the program will operate include Kingston Galloway, Guildwood, Flemingdon Park, Malvern and Warden Woods.

GILBERT NGABO/METRO

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Finance minister's blue shoes mark federal budget

POLITICS

Blueprint to be augmented with host of measures

The symbolism of Finance Minister Joe Oliver donning a pair of Tory-blue sneakers on Monday for the traditional new-budget-shoes photo op shouldn't be lost on anyone.

A federal election may be six months away, but Tuesday's promised delivery of the Harper government's first balanced spending blueprint in eight years means the Conservatives are already off and running.

The well-orchestrated march to the 2015 general election began more than a year ago, when the government presented a 2014 budget that, it turns out, could have reasonably showed a surplus — but held off the big reveal until Canadians were closer to the ballot box.

The parliamentary budget office last week predicted 2014-15 will come in $3.4 billion in the black — a possible jump start on those "New Balance" runners Oliver slipped on at a Toronto shoe store.

The long march continued last Halloween at a campaign-style event in Vaughan, Ont., where Prime Minister Stephen Harper rolled out a five-year, $27-billion package of improvements to family benefits and targeted tax cuts — a sort of rolling campaign barrage timed to light up the fireworks in July when families receive their first retroactive benefit cheques.

Federal Finance Minister Joe Oliver shows off his new budget shoes during a photo op in Toronto on Monday. FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRADITION

It is a Canadian custom for finance ministers to purchase or wear new shoes for Budget Day.

The simple electoral arithmetic of tax breaks and benefit boosts was on display Monday in the House of Commons.

"In my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, (constituents) get up every morning, they get to work and what they want their government to do is put more money back in their pockets to invest in their priorities," said Paul Calandra, Harper's parliamentary secretary.

Between Tuesday's budget launch and those well-timed, mid-summer family cheques, there will be an orgy of government self-promotion, with $7.5 million already earmarked for "economic action plan" advertising.

> **By eliminating two (percentage) points off the GST and then giving away other tax room, they have made the framework impervious to policy.**
>
> Elly Alboim, a principal at Earnscliffe Strategy Group and former adviser to former Liberal finance minister Paul Martin

These large set pieces of the Conservative re-election campaign will be augmented Tuesday with a host of smaller measures aimed up shoring up perceived weaknesses and bolstering perceived strengths.

Help for seniors — a key Conservative voting demographic — is also expected through changes to registered retirement income fund rules and a long-promised doubling of the $5,500 annual limit on tax-free savings accounts.

There will be cash for the national-security apparatus, a big government selling point in this season of domestic terror attacks and overseas military missions.

Announcements linked to the upcoming countrywide celebrations for Canada's 150th birthday in 2017 are also expected as the Conservatives pound home the "Strong Proud Free" marketing tag line they've introduced to government ads.

There will likely be targeted infrastructure funding for major public-transit projects, spending the government will promote as "green" to help cover a weak environmental policy flank while wooing those suburban commuters Calandra referenced.

And there may be measures to bolster manufacturing, small businesses and skills training as the Conservatives attempt to buff their job-creation credentials.

Headlining it will be the return to surplus, backstopped by proposed balanced-budget legislation.

While the dramatic plunge in global oil prices — which spurred Oliver to delay his budget release — is viewed by some to have tripped up Conservative budget plans, it had one welcome side effect for a government heading to the electorate.

Elly Alboim, a principal at Earnscliffe Strategy Group and former adviser to former Liberal finance minister Paul Martin, said that the Conservative fiscal framework laid out in the federal budget will fetter the opposition parties.

"By eliminating two (percentage) points off the GST and then giving away other tax room, they have made the framework impervious to policy," said Alboim.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

ENTERTAINMENT

Q or q: What's in a name?

So is it q or Q?

Last week, CBC announced the new Shad-hosted version of its arts-and-culture radio program Q was getting a little makeover. The show would keep its name but would be branded with a lowercase q.

Before Shad's first show aired Monday, the public broadcaster clarified its position.

The CBC said in a tweet that the show's logo would use a small q, but for "clarity and readability," the program would otherwise be referred to with an uppercase Q in written communication.

But late Monday, the CBC scrapped that plan and said it would be sticking with q after all.

"While we are in a period of transition and making changes across various platforms, you may still see both versions. However, going forward 'q' will be referred to as lower case," a spokeswoman wrote by email.

She would not say why the CBC changed its brand strategy.

The rebrand was viewed as another step by the CBC to distance itself from disgraced former Q host Jian Ghomeshi.

Ghomeshi was fired in October amid sexual-assault charges. He faces seven counts of sexual assault and one of overcoming resistance by choking, but his lawyer has said he will plead not guilty to all charges.

Shad made no mention of Ghomeshi as he steered his inaugural q broadcast in front of a live audience at CBC's Glenn Gould Studio.

Once the show went off the air, Shad told the audience that their enthusiasm "almost brought (him) to tears."

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Migrant crisis vexes EU

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Leaders to meet Thursday in Brussels

Shaken by the feared drowning of hundreds of people in the latest Mediterranean tragedy, European leaders struggled Monday for an adequate response in the face of unremitting migrant flows and continued instability in Libya that has given free rein to human traffickers.

Even as the search continued for victims of the weekend disaster that left as many as 950 people feared dead, coast guard ships rushed to respond to new distress calls on the high seas — two off Libya and a third boat that ran aground near Greece.

Decrying what he called an "escalation in these death voyages," Italian Premier Matteo Renzi urged Europe to put the focus on preventing more boats from leaving Libya, the source of 90 per cent of migrant traffic to Italy.

"We are facing an organized criminal activity that is making lots of money, but above all ruining many lives," Renzi said at a joint news conference with Malta's prime minister, Joseph Muscat. He compared their activity to that of slave traders of centuries past, "unscrupulous men who traded human lives."

The European Union foreign affairs chief, Federica Mogherini, said this weekend's appalling human toll — which, if verified, would be the deadliest migrant tragedy ever — had "finally" fully awakened the European Union to the evils of human trafficking.

The EU has been under increasing criticism for lagging in its response to the crisis, with two shipwrecks believed to have taken the lives of as many as 1,300 migrants in the past week. Some 400 people are believed to have drowned in another capsizing on April 13.

Stopping the traffickers will be a key item on the agenda when EU leaders meet in an emergency summit Thursday in Brussels, along with a proposal to double spending on sea patrols off Europe's southern border. The 10-point plan includes a proposal to take "civil-military" action modeled on previous operations in the Horn of Africa to combat Somali piracy.

Meanwhile, new details emerged about the weekend disaster, with Italian prosecutors saying hundreds of migrants were locked below deck unable to escape when the rickety boat capsized off the coast of Libya.

1,300

The EU has been under increasing criticism for lagging in its response to the crisis, with two shipwrecks believed to have taken the lives of as many as 1,300 migrants in the past week.

At a news conference in Catania, Sicily, prosecutor Giovanni Salvi said "a few hundred were forced into the hold and they were locked in and prevented from coming out." He said hundreds more were locked on a second level of the boat, which also had hundreds of migrants squeezed into its upper deck.

Salvi said the migrants rushed to one side of the boat as they saw a Portuguese-flagged container vessel approach, with the promise of rescue contributing to the disaster.

"Merchant ships don't have adequate training for rescues in the seas," Salvi warned. "The fact is, sea rescues are difficult and require professionalism."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man rescues a migrant from the Aegean Sea Monday, in the eastern island of Rhodes. Greek authorities said that at least three people have died, including a child, after a wooden boat carrying migrants ran aground off the island. ARGIRIS MANTIKOS/EUROKINISSI VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Immigrants flee South Africa after deadly attacks

Worried about their safety, hundreds of African immigrants headed out of South Africa in buses on Monday following deadly attacks on foreign-owned shops. South Africa's anti-immigrant attacks, in which seven people have been killed this month, have angered many across the continent. South African diplomats in at least two other African countries reported threats of reprisal attacks because of the violence at home.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Saudi-led airstrikes in Yemen flatten houses

Saudi-led airstrikes hit weapons caches held by Iran-backed Shiite rebels, touching off massive explosions Monday in Yemen's capital that killed at least 19 people and buried scores of others under the rubble of flattened homes. The U.S. Navy, meanwhile, has dispatched the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt toward the waters off Yemen to join other American ships prepared to intercept any Iranian vessels carrying weapons to the rebels, U.S. officials said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spanish boy kills teacher

A 13-year-old Spanish boy armed with a crossbow and a machete killed a substitute teacher and wounded four other people at his school in Barcelona on Monday, police said. The unidentified boy was detained by police as a suspect in the attack that also saw two other teachers and two students injured. Authorities said the boy, who was undergoing a psychiatric examination, will not face criminal charges because he is under the age of 14. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Cirque du Soleil founder keeps kids out of Big Top

ENTERTAINMENT

Guy Laliberté sells his circus to U.S., Chinese investors

The force behind Cirque du Soleil's nearly 31-year run as a world-renowned Canadian success story is selling the famed circus even though his seven-year-old daughter has dreams of one day becoming a clown.

"I truly don't believe in second-generation entrepreneurship," Guy Laliberté told a news conference on Monday after announcing the sale to a U.S. private equity firm.

Laliberté, 55, has five children between the ages of seven and 18, but said that having them take over the Cirque was never really an option.

"From the outset, I didn't want to put the pressure of running the circus on their shoulders."

The creator of the Cirque, which wowed the world with breathtaking and cutting-edge shows, will maintain a 10 per cent stake in the Montreal-based company through his family trust and will also continue to provide strategic and creative input.

Equity firm TPG is acquiring a 60 per cent stake for an undisclosed price. Chinese investment firm Fosun will have a 20 per cent stake and Quebec pension fund manager the Caisse de dépôt another 10 per cent.

The transaction — which Laliberté said wasn't a "fire sale" at a reported value of around $1.5 billion — will also see partner Dubai World sell its 10 per cent stake.

Laliberté dismissed any suggestions the Cirque is in financial difficulty, saying it is a profitable venture that sells 11 million tickets a year.

He said the sale — only approved early Friday morning — will be good for the Cirque as it aligns with partners that can nearly double its growth by piercing the complex Chinese market and expanding third-party licensing deals and digital media.

Although the new owners have made a commitment to Investment Canada to preserve the Cirque's Montreal headquarters, there's no written guarantee.

But incoming chairman Mitch Garber said TPG understands the company's core value is its Quebec-based creativity.

"It's not only a political statement and a statement of heart, it's a sensible financial reality that we have with the Cirque du Soleil," he told reporters.

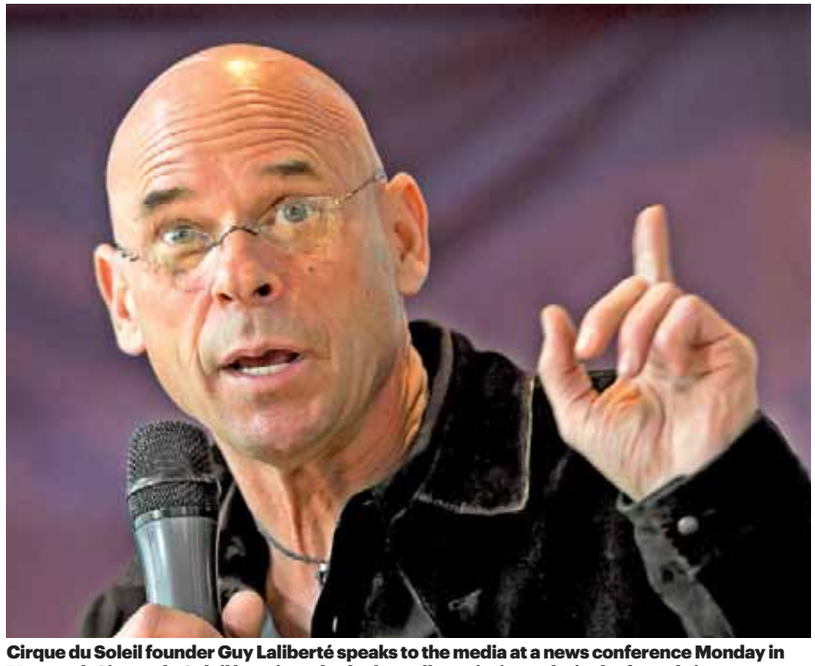
Laliberte rejected a recent newspaper cartoon that showed U.S. flags flying over the Cirque's big top. He likened the Cirque to other respected Quebec-based companies like Alimentation Couche-Tard, Molson Coors, Bombardier and Garda that have large U.S. shareholders.

"Why are we so scared we will lose that identity?" he asked. The fact is that with just a eight million people, Quebec companies can only pursue international growth by finding well-financed corporate partners, he said.

"And sorry gang, there is a little more money on the other side of the border than there is here to allow companies like the Cirque or others to grow more solidly."

The sale to the group led by TPG is expected to close in the third quarter.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberté speaks to the media at a news conference Monday in Montreal. Cirque du Soleil has signed a deal to sell a majority stake in the famed circus group to U.S. private equity firm TPG for an undisclosed price. RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **I truly don't believe in second-generation entrepreneurship ... From the outset, I didn't want to put the pressure of running the circus on their shoulders.**
> Guy Laliberté, Cirque du Soleil founder

PARTNERS

Long hunt for right match

Guy Laliberté said he was surprised to have lasted so long, having originally foreseen a 10-year run. He began to think about finding a strategic partner in 2006, and thought he found the right match two years later in Dubai World, a large real estate developer that quickly ran into financial difficulties. The latest sale process originally identified 94 potential partners. After weeding out incompatible potential partners, the list was whittled down to 46. Eight finalists were chosen among 17 that responded with offers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FOOD

KD set to remove artificial colour

Kraft is pledging to remove synthetic colouring from its Canadian Kraft Dinner Original product by the end of 2016.

This year will mark the last that the original version of Kraft Mac & Cheese, as it is sold in the U.S., will contain artificial preservatives or synthetic colours. In January, Kraft said its macaroni and cheese would be coloured using paprika, annatto and turmeric.

There has been a huge shift away from processed foods in the U.S. and larger food producers are trying to follow their customers in that direction.

A Change.org petition that began in March 2013 asked Kraft to remove dyes from its macaroni and cheese. The petition garnered more than 365,000 signatures.

The company said that it has worked for some time to make the changes to the product, but had to ensure that customers would not notice a change in taste. "We weren't ready to change the product until we were confident that Kraft Macaroni & Cheese tastes like Kraft Macaroni & Cheese," the company said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

market minute

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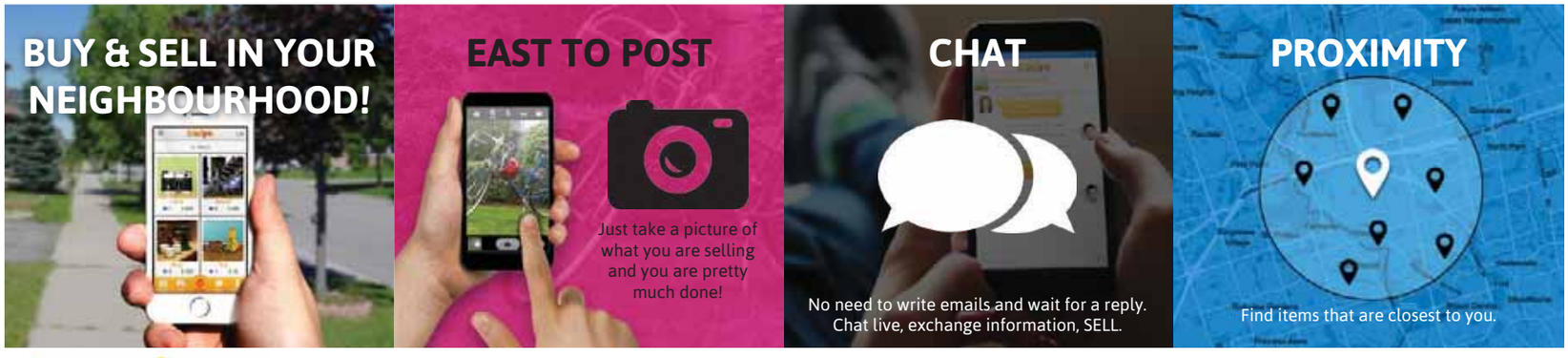
TSX 15,412.60 (+ 52.05)

OIL $56.38 US (+64¢)

GOLD $1,193.70 US (-$9.40)

NATURAL GAS: $2.536 US (-9.8¢)
DOW JONES: 18,034.93 (+208.63)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the big number

81.1%

That's how many Canadians are urbanites as of 2011 — a near-complete reversal of the ratio 150 years earlier, in 1861, when city dwellers comprised less than 16 per cent of pre-Confederation Canada. Among G8 countries, we're the third most urbanized, behind the U.K. and U.S. Among 15- to 29-year-olds, the current divide is even more pronounced: Only 17 per cent live in rural areas. Statistics Canada

Queen's Park bill could seriously challenge Uber

YOUR RIDE

Glyn Bowerman

Toronto's taxicab industry is being hamstrung by the past, and extorted by the future.

Today, the licensing and standards committee is slated to reconsider a host of industry reforms which council implemented just last year.

Meanwhile, UberX drivers continue to operate in the city without the necessary municipal licence, flying in the face of municipal bylaws, in spite of, or unaware of, the fact they are breaching Ontario's Highway Traffic Act.

The city is being pulled in every direction on this issue, with no solution in sight.

A report from the executive director of municipal licensing and standards cautions the committee that a return to pre-2014 regulations would "perpetuate a multi-tier licensing system" where one type of license allows owners to hire drivers to work for them, reaping the profits, while another requires owners to drive their own cab.

On top of that, the report warns that returning to the pre-2014 regulations would "render city council's goal of achieving 100 per cent wheelchair accessibility unattainable."

Under the new Toronto Taxicab Licence, owner/operators would be required to drive an accessible vehicle. How, in good conscience, can councillors turn the clock back on that?

It's clear Toronto has plenty of soul searching to do when it comes to taxi regulation in this city. Meanwhile, Uber is blowing through every stop, in what appears to be very bad faith, daring lawmakers to challenge them.

Queen's Park might be up to that challenge. Bill 53, the Protecting Passenger Safety Act, just passed second reading. If it makes it through committee, and third reading, it will provide municipalities with a powerful tool in dealing with unlicensed commercial drivers.

John Fraser, the MPP for Ottawa South who proposed the bill, says that while the legislation isn't about new technology like Uber, it is important for governments to ensure the safety of public transportation. That includes taxi services. "When you're in a car with somebody you don't know, you're very vulnerable," says Fraser.

If passed, Bill 53 would increase the penalties for unlicensed commercial drivers — anywhere between $500 and $30,000 dollars — and authorities would have the ability to suspend licences, add demerit points, and seize vehicles.

This would be a profound disincentive to unlicensed operators. In Toronto, that includes UberX drivers.

Currently, Uber insists it is a technology provider, not a taxi service, while in the same breath assuring the public their drivers are as safe and trustworthy as licensed cab drivers. The doublespeak is baffling.

An argument for reform is not an argument in Uber's favour. Nor is the condemnation of Uber's practices, to date, support for the status quo. A company like Uber, valued at around $40 billion, cannot be allowed to dictate terms to a municipality.

That said, the city has ample evidence that the pre-2014 system is not fair, equitable, universally accessible, or particularly liked.

Legislators have some tough decisions ahead, and the meter's running.

Glyn Bowerman is a Toronto-based journalist, theatre artist, and regular contributor to Spacing Magazine. Follow him @Banquos_Banquet

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Fake guide dogs, and their lying, entitled, arrogant owners

Dear guide dog fraudsters.

I know you think you've been getting away with buying a fake guide-dog coat and parading into cafés and hotels, even onto planes, with your pet pooch Princess. I know, those jackets are as cheap and easy to buy online as, well, anything else.

Disability advocates like Bill Thornton, CEO of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, has had his phone ringing off the hook with complaints about fake guide dogs, he told me, like the restaurateur who wanted to know if it was normal for a guide dog to come into a restaurant, take a seat at a table, and eat a meal.

"This actually occurred," he told me, the disbelief still in his voice.

I know you think you've been getting away with it. But the guide-dog agencies are on to you. You're part of a rising problem of fake service dogs, they say, and now the B.C. government is doing something about it. A new law will soon require all guide-dog owners to carry a government-issued ID so that business owners can know for sure whether Princess is the real deal (something that already exists in Alberta).

But Thornton is most concerned about a potential backlash toward guide dogs and their owners, thanks to the likes of you and Princess.

Guide dogs are well-trained and well-behaved. Did you know that only about 50 per cent of the dogs Thornton's group trains actually get certified? The rules are tight to maintain public trust in service animals.

But Princess, as you know, has terrible manners. She barks, and she bites. And you're not much better.

Anytime someone calls you out for being a disability fraud, you become irate. Thornton hears about fraudster outbursts like yours all the time, he said.

It's unseemly, you know, on so many levels.

First, you are lying.

Second, you are playing on the sympathy of those too uncomfortable to question you about yappy, snappy Princess.

But third and worst of all, you are giving service dogs a bad name. If the public trust is broken, do you know who that hurts most? People who need dogs to see, hear, or detect an oncoming seizure.

B.C.'s Guide Dog and Service Dog act will make faking a guide dog an offence, with a fine up to $3,000 if you're caught. And I hope you are.

This isn't about Princess. This is all about you: Entitled, arrogant, narcissistic you.

Impersonating someone with a disability for your own petty gains? You can't get much lower than that, guide-dog fraudster.

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PHILOSOPHER CAT
by Jason Logan

Sleeping Giant rouses Cannes

FILM FESTIVAL

Canadian director's first film to screen at French fest

Jessica Smith Cross
Metro | Toronto

Nate (Nick Serino) at the wheel, Riley (Reece Moffett) in the passenger seat, and Adam (Jackson Martin) in the backseat, in a scene from Sleeping Giant. The Canadian film directed by Andrew Cividino has been selected to compete at Cannes. AARON YEGER

Andrew Cividino was eating alone at a restaurant when he looked at his phone and screamed "Oh my God!"

He looked a little crazy at that moment, but he hadn't actually lost his mind. He's a Canadian director who'd just learned his first feature film was selected to screen at the Cannes Film Festival.

"I was actually at a McDonald's, which is a confession, and I was eating a hamburger surrounded by all of these other people," he said. "I think if you scream, 'Oh my God!' on a phone call, people know that you're talking to another human being. But if you're just looking at your screen, it's really hard for people to understand that."

He was elated to learn his film Sleeping Giant is one of seven feature films in competition at the International Critics' Week at Cannes, which is devoted to honouring new directors' first or second feature-length films.

That week has launched the careers of many famous directors, including some of Cividino's favourites: Kevin Smith, Guillermo del Toro and Alejandro González Iñárritu.

Sleeping Giant is named for the Sibley Peninsula on Thunder Bay, where Cividino spent his summers growing up. His film is the story of a boy named Adam and his friends, pushing the boundaries of safety and their youthful authority over a summer there.

It's partly inspired by Cividino's own experiences jumping off the cliffs of the Sleeping Giant into Lake Superior.

"It was really insane, we would really push our boundaries to levels I would now consider to be quite unsafe, but at the time, it just seemed like the obvious, the only thing to be doing," he said.

"There's this Lord of the Flies stage of male adolescence that comes along with these destructive impulses and one way of testing your boundaries in the world is to destroy the world around you," he said.

"That's where we follow the boys."

CASTING

Film's lead a walk-in

Andrew Cividino. JESSICA SMITH CROSS/METRO

Cividino found the actors in Thunder Bay by putting flyers up around town. Nick Serino, who plays Adam, walked into an audition without a script, appointment or acting credits.

"He just said, 'I saw on Kijiji you guys had posted something. I'm here for the movie," Cividino said. "Within 30 seconds we knew this kid is so special."

Serino's cousin in real life, Reece Moffett, is one of the co-stars.

Cividino wanted the boys to use their own voices in the film, so he'd "workshop" the scenes with them rather than strictly sticking to the script. "Some scenes are a lot more challenging because of that, but you end up with moments that you couldn't possibly have considered writing yourself, which just ring true and are hilarious."

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How Sweden became a musical powerhouse

HISTORY

Moral panic of 1940s paved way for talent

SOUND CHECK

Alan Cross

For a country of 35 million, Canada punches far above its weight when it comes to exporting its music to the rest of the world. But then there's Sweden. With fewer than 10 million people, the country is a musical monster.

There's the unending parade of cool indie artists: Lykke Li, Tove Lo, Peter, Bjorn & John, The Sounds, The Radio Dept., The Shout Out Louds, The Hives. And let's not even start on Sweden's role in metal. Or that Sweden is the birthplace of Spotify.

Sweden gave birth to ABBA, a group that has sold nearly 400 million albums, second only to the Beatles. It's also the home of Max Martin, the producer/songwriter who crafted megahits for the Backstreet Boys, 'N Sync, Britney Spears, Katy Perry, P!nk and Taylor Swift. He's produced more No. 1 hits than anyone except George Martin — and he had the Beatles.

So how did this sparsely populated northern European country become such a global powerhouse?

The answer starts with the 1940s, when cultural conservatives and church leaders banded together to protect the country's youth from the "dance-floor misery" of degenerate music coming from America. They set up a system of music schools — no tuition, free use of instruments — to show the young how morally uplifting classical music could be.

By the 1960s, the system diversified into other genres of music. While this diluted the original intent of streaming the young into the classical realm, it offered kids more and more opportunity to discover what musical talents they had.

Coupled with government subsidies for rehearsal space (and sometime for just rehearsing), a network of musically inclined people took root across the country. Ideas were exchanged quickly and efficiently. Tightly knit musical communities were created.

This sort of support and social networking brought the people in ABBA together. And when they hit it big, there was a sense across the country that if they could do it, anyone could. Since then, there's been a real can-do spirit amongst the musically inclined in Sweden. Now the country exports more than $150 million US in music sales to the rest of the planet, the largest per-capita in the world.

It was a social engineering experiment gone wrong, but things have worked out just fine.

Lykke Li, left, and Tove Lo GETTY IMAGES

John Moose hails from Karlstad, Sweden. CONTRIBUTED

MOBILE APP

Band's new album free to listen to — in nature

John Moose, a Swedish five-piece band, has released a mobile app that allows listeners to enjoy their debut album for free. The catch: The app knows where you are, and it'll let you listen only when you get yourself to a woodland setting.

Hailing from Karlstad, the band says its roots are "in the deep wild woods of Värmland," a province in which Karlstad is the largest city. John Moose is also the name of a character whose stories they tell through their songs, which "tell a tale of escapism, where he finds himself stuck in the ambivalence between the civilization and its counterpart."

With that in mind, the musicians want those who experience their album to find themselves in a similar space.

The album — which can also be pre-ordered now, with shipping to next week — is available in its entirety via the app, which can be downloaded for iOS or Android via johnmoosemusic.com/prerelease. Download it where you like, but to begin listening to the music, you'll need to be in a spot your phone recognizes as woods.

"Walk to the woods ..." the app instructs, followed by the message, "You are there. Now listen."

Tobias Norén, the band's drummer and digital director of Bacill production agency, says the wooded areas are detected through Google Static Maps API. AFP

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MUSICIAN'S SIDELINE

Willie Nelson to roll out own brand of marijuana

Music legend Willie Nelson is jumping into the movement to commercialize marijuana and plans to roll out his own brand of cannabis that he intends to make "the best on the market."

The singer-songwriter announced in a statement Monday that Willie's Reserve will be grown and sold in Colorado and Washington, two states where recreational use of the drug is legal.

Nelson is a longtime supporter of marijuana for personal use and has spoken of its benefits for hemp production. He's also pushed for the end of laws criminalizing use of the drug. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COVER TUNE

Imbruglia single is her first in years

The Australian singer-songwriter Natalie Imbruglia, who made it big in the late 1990s, is releasing her first single in six years on Monday.

The new single Instant Crush is from her upcoming cover album entitled Male, scheduled for release in July 2015.

Why has the female songstress opted for such a name? Like Instant Crush, which was first sung by Daft Punk and Julian Casablancas, all of the titles were first recorded by male artists.

Imbruglia told Mashable that she didn't want to touch songs previously sung by other women.

"I found it was more interesting to hear my vocals on songs done by men because it's different right away," she said.

This is not the first time Imbruglia has pursued cover music. Her first international hit single, Torn was a cover of the '90s rock band Ednaswap. AFP

Natalie Imbruglia's cover album Male is coming in July. AFP

Brittany Howard, frontwoman of Alabama Shakes, performs onstage at Coachella. GETTY IMAGES

Alabama Shakes' new album 'pretty eclectic'

SOPHOMORE RELEASE

Sound & Color reflects growth of the band

So many promising music careers are tripped up by the challenge of following a successful debut that its perils are an industry cliché.

Now the Alabama Shakes face this unavoidable rite of passage. The bar band from Athens, Ala., with electrifying frontwoman Brittany Howard sold 737,000 copies of its first disc, earned three Grammy nominations, performed twice on Saturday Night Live, played for President Obama and earned enough critical hurrahs to fill a trunk.

Faced with the choice of fulfilling or confounding expectations with its new Sound & Color (out Tuesday), the Shakes chose the latter. The band is challenging its audience to move forward, almost defiantly so. During its first Coachella performance earlier this month, the set list notably did not include Hold On, Hang Loose or Always Alright, three of the young act's best-known songs.

"We knew some people would probably want a similar record and there were some people who would probably be frustrated if we did something similar," said guitarist Heath Fogg, neatly summarizing the classic second album dilemma. "There's no point in trying to please anybody other than ourselves."

The band describes the adventurousness of Sound & Color as less a strategy than a reflection of the creative process.

Howard said that when she began writing songs, she quickly got bored because it seemed she was trying to write songs that were familiar, that sounded like things she had already written. That self-awareness freed her to experiment more.

"It's a pretty eclectic mixed bag of things that we like," Howard said.

"It wasn't intentional. I think we just had grown up as artists and players. There's so much that we are into and so much that we like. The roots of our music will always be there, because that's how we get along with each other. But there are so many languages, as far as music goes, that we can speak with to one another." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Lighten up on the locker-room louts

GYM MANNERS

Sloths who strew sweaty clothes aren't your problem

URBAN ETIQUETTE

Ellen Vanstone

Slobs tend to be immune to threats, sighs, passive-aggressive remarks or outright begging for humane treatment of their locker-room neighbours. ISTOCK

Dear Ellen,
One of my biggest pet peeves is walking into my gym's change room to find a pile of sweaty gym clothes left on the bench or on the ground. The gym has plenty of lockers, so I really don't understand why people would strip off to go shower and just leave their clothes — don't even get my started on the underwear — out for the world to see, and smell.
— Mike in Halifax

Dear Mike,
The men you are dealing with are likely from the well-known subspecies Men Who Have Always Been Picked Up After (MWHABPUA). These are the lazy, overly entitled brats whose moms, caretakers, life- or roommates are happy to follow around, picking up soggy towels, wiping sprayed toothpaste spittle off mirrors, rinsing shaved-off stubble down the drain, and applying Polysporin to cuts on their own run-off feet after stepping on razor-sharp shards of the MWHABPUA's clipped toenails.

At least, I hope you are dealing with a MWHABPUA, because the alternative is even more disgusting — Men So In Love With Their Own Filth They Think Everyone Else Loves It Too (MSILWTOFTEELIT). These men may also have been raised by people who picked up after them. Or maybe they were raised in a barn, by wolves. Either way, there's clearly no one picking up after them now, and believe me, they don't notice, much less care. These are the type of derelict jocks who leave their reeking gym duds all over the place while they shower, and then stuff everything into their lockers still damp and warm so it can breed more tiny bacterial monsters that will reek extra hard the next time they work out.

Do they think doing laundry is for sissies? Do they think this is how real men are supposed to smell? (It's not.) Did they get punched out one too many times and their deviated septums have killed all sense of smell?

Who knows? The important thing to realize with both MWHABPUA and MSILWTOFTEELIT is that it's your problem, not theirs. Slobs of this calibre are immune to threats, sighs, passive-aggressive remarks or outright begging for humane treatment of their locker-room neighbours.

My advice is: Learn to love the louts. Now that mom's not around, you may be the only one who ever does ...

STUDY

Twitter helps predict ER visits for asthma

Researchers are leveraging the microblogging platform to predict the volume of asthma-related emergency room visits one Dallas hospital can expect on a given day.

Researchers at the University of Arizona (UA) and the Parkland Center for Clinical Innovation in Dallas, Texas mined Twitter for information.

Their method involves monitoring air quality data using environmental sensors and scanning Twitter for posts with relevant key words such as "asthma," "inhaler" and "wheezing."

Text-mining techniques are then used to hone in on the tweets from the zip codes where most of the hospital's patients live, according to electronic medical records. By analyzing the data, the researchers developed an algorithm that predicted with 75 per cent accuracy whether the emergency room could expect a low, medium or high number of asthma-related visits on a given day.

These predictions allowed the hospital to be better prepared, namely by ensuring that qualified staff and appropriate equipment were in place on peak days.

"You can get a lot of interesting insights from social media that you can't from electronic health records," said UA professor Sudha Ram, one of the leaders of the study.

"We think that prediction models like this can be very useful, if we can combine various types of data, to address chronic diseases."

AFP

By scanning Twitter for words like 'wheezing' researchers can predict asthma-related ER visits. AFP

DISEASES

Pets may pose illness threat to children

Pets are a wellspring of love and joy for their owners. But they can also be a source of disease if someone in a household has health problems.

In a review article published in this week's Canadian Medical Association Journal, two veterinarians and a physician from the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario discuss a variety of diseases people can get from pets. They make clear that in most cases, the risks to pet owners are low.

In particular, they recommend families forgo puppies and kittens if someone in the household has a badly compromised immune system. Young animals, like young children, are more likely to catch and spread germs.

"It's like having that young child in the household," lead author Dr. Jason Stull, a veterinarian at Ohio State University, said.

"If there is an individual who is severely immunocompromised, that may not be the best choice."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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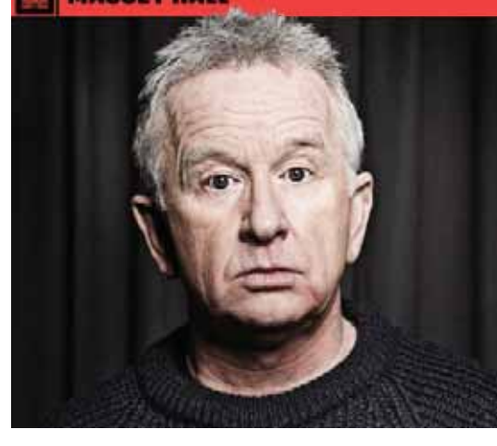

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The Sharks and head coach Todd McLellan have agreed to part ways

Tuesday, April 21, 2015

Lou goes from high flyer to 'coolest dude in the world'

SIXTH MAN OF THE YEAR

Williams has taken game to more cerebral level in Toronto

The excitement in the Air Canada Centre is palpable when Lou Williams gets the ball.

Fans eagerly anticipate his patented move, a couple dribbles to his left, a three-pointer let fly, the excitement building as it tracks toward the basket.

They know the Raptors guard — named the NBA's Sixth Man of the Year on Monday — as a deadly shooter, a long-distance marksman of extraordinary skill.

They will perhaps be surprised, then, to learn how his high school coach used him, the skills they exploited when the 28-year-old Williams was a South Gwinnett, Ga., teenager.

"We started every game with a dunk play just to intimidate the other team," Roger Fleetwood, who coached Williams in high school, said Monday after a ceremony honouring the Toronto guard.

"Oak Hill (a prestigious U.S. prep school program); we're playing (NBA stars) Kevin Durant and Ty Lawson and we started with a dunk play against them for him."

That Williams has come this far, having re-made his game to a more grounded style after tearing his anterior cruciate ligament more than two years ago, made Tuesday's honour all the more special.

He may not be a high-flyer any more but he is a more complete player and now has the recognition to go with it.

"I knew that I wasn't going to have the foot speed I once had, I knew that I wasn't going to be able to jump as high, but it taught me to be smarter," Williams said of his rehab time after the injury suffered 39 games into his first season with his hometown Atlanta Hawks. "I worked on different parts of my game. This year is probably the most three-pointers I've taken in my career.

"To really be able to evolve and change my game, to win this award is very gratifying."

But not in the least surprising to those who know him best.

"I knew he would come back, I knew what's inside him, I knew what drives him," said Fleetwood. "I knew he would do what he needed to do to get back to where he wanted to be."

In just a year with the Raptors — president and general manager Masai Ujiri pried him away from Atlanta last summer for John Salmons in one of the great heists in franchise history — not only has Williams captured the hearts of the fans, he's become one of the most popular players among teammates as well.

Williams will be a free agent in July but has expressed interest in returning to Toronto.

"One thing he brought to the table for us was a quiet leadership that I didn't know he had," coach Dwane Casey said. "He knows when he wants to go hard, he knows how to go hard but also he knew how to talk to his teammates, he knew how to motivate his teammates."

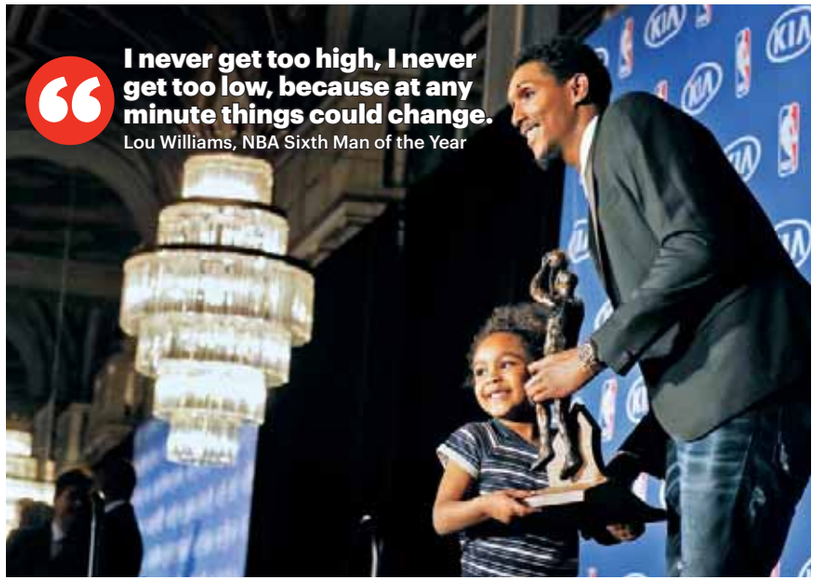
How big was his impact with his teammates? Quite aside from what he brought to the floor, he was a locker room hit.

DeMar DeRozan called him "the coolest dude in the world" and Drake even mentioned Williams in one of his songs.

Williams appreciates the praise and is just thankful he was able to resurrect his career here.

"I'm quiet, I mind my business and I just come to work every day," he said. "For (DeRozan) to say that about me, I'm just grateful for it."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



Raptors guard Lou Williams poses with his daughter Jada after winning the NBA Sixth Man of the Year award on Monday at the Royal York Hotel. STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

15.5

Lou Williams' reserve role with the Raptors this season allowed him to average a career-best 15.5 points per game while taking a load of offensive pressure off of Toronto's top players.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Fan outcry won't affect Raptors' strategy: Casey

There will come a time when James Johnson will likely play for the Raptors in their first-round series, but it will be because coach Dwane Casey knows it gives his team a strategic advantage and not because people are clamouring for the little-used forward to get on the court.

"It's a strategic decision," Casey said Tuesday.

Johnson has become something of a cause célèbre; fans see a powerful forward who doesn't play an awful lot and wonder why. Coaches see someone with significant flaws in his game — over-helping on defence, freelancing and creating spacing issues on offence — and want to pick their spots to use him.

"Not trying to be stubborn, say 'Hey, we're not going to play James Johnson,'" said Casey. "No. This is a strategic decision, we understand what we're doing, it's nothing against James, it's nothing against anybody else that's in that situation."

Johnson said he's less comfortable playing power forward — where many presumably see him guarding Washington's Paul Pierce — than at his usual small forward position.

"I'm here for matchup problems," he said, insisting there are no issues between him and Casey. "I'm here for the long season, when Kyle got hurt or DeMar got hurt. Those were when I had opportunities to play a lot."

I'm the fill-in. And I'm OK with that.
James Johnson

The waiting game: The extended nature of the first-round schedule — driven solely by television — creates an awful lot of down time. Coaches don't mind it because allows for more practice, but players are a bit more anxious for games.

"I don't like the anxiety that kicks in with waiting so long," DeMar DeRozan said Tuesday. "But, at the same time, it's a good thing to be able to rest and really get that energy you need back. But the anticipation and anxiety definitely kicks in."

The coach?

"I love the extra day off," Casey said. "It helps us so we can prepare yesterday, today, do some things on the court, work out.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

James Johnson TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BOSTON MARATHON

A second chance to celebrate

Lelisa Desisa won his first Boston Marathon in 2013.

He didn't have much time to celebrate.

A few hours after Desisa broke the tape on Boylston Street on Patriots' Day, two bombs near the finish line turned what should be the pinnacle of any distance runner's career into an afterthought.

Desisa earned his second Boston Marathon title Monday, finishing in two hours, nine minutes, 17 seconds to claim a golden olive wreath, the $150,000 first prize and a winner's medal to replace the one he donated to the city two years ago in memory of the victims. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ethiopia's Lelisa Desisa on Monday in Boston
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

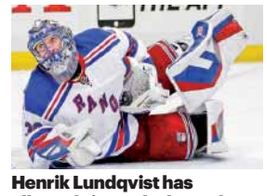
NHL PLAYOFFS

Rangers wrangle Penguins

Henrik Lundqvist stopped 23 shots and the New York Rangers regained control of their first-round series against the Pittsburgh Penguins with a 2-1 win in Game 3 on Tuesday night.

Carl Hagelin and Chris Kreider scored for New York, which dominated for two periods then held on late to take a 2-1 series lead.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Henrik Lundqvist has allowed six goals through three games vs. Pittsburgh.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OHL

Strome has hockey smarts on and off ice

When Erie Otters coach Kris Knoblauch asks his team a question about hockey, one player always seems to have the answer: Dylan Strome.

"I've never met anyone that knows as much as him," says Knoblauch.

"If you were to ask anything about the NHL or the OHL he would have an answer.

"I could pose a question about the other team's power play — who's on it, what percentage they're running. If the room is stumped, he's the guy with the answer. We might just be talking about in the NHL, who's the leading scorer, or who's the fourth-line left winger for the Penguins. He would have the answer. He just enjoys hockey."

The good news for whatever NHL team drafts Strome — projected on some lists to go No. 4, right where the Maple Leafs sit — is that his on-ice hockey IQ eclipses his off-ice hockey IQ.

"He's better on the ice," said Knoblauch. "He knows where his teammates are. He knows how to expose another team's weakness.

Dylan Strome GETTY IMAGES

"He's not a one-dimensional player. He can score goals or set them up. He scored a lot of goals this year. I didn't expect that from a 17-year-old coming in. We didn't see him as a goal-scorer but more of a playmaker."

It's an exceptionally deep draft this year, one in which comparisons to greats are free-flowing and the phrase "In any other year (pick a name) would go first" is oft-repeated.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Refining talent search key to rebuilding Leafs

THE HOCKEY NEWS

Adam Proteau

The challenge for Brendan Shanahan and co. will be finding useful talent after the first round of the draft. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The Maple Leafs didn't win Saturday's NHL draft lottery (Lady Luck once again smiled on the Edmonton Oilers, who with junior phenom and consensus No. 1 pick this year Connor McDavid are now officially The Beatles of The Bingo Balls), but the good news is Toronto didn't drop any slots and will have the fourth overall selection.

That means they're going to walk away from the draft (slated for June 26 in Florida) with an excellent player — either OHL center Dylan Strome or NCAA defenseman Noah Hannifin — who will be a cornerstone of their long-term rebuild.

But the real work for team president Brendan Shanahan, assistant GMs Mark Hunter and Kyle Dubas, and whomever Shanahan hires to replace Dave Nonis as GM will begin after they make that first pick. For too many years, the Leafs have failed to develop players from the draft's later rounds into significant contributors at the NHL level. If the franchise can't change that and identify talent that isn't as obvious as McDavid's, their first-round picks aren't going to matter.

That said, Shanahan's decision to clear out much of the current scouting staff is another encouraging sign for the future. The Leafs had built up one of the biggest groups of scouts in the league, but there needed to be accountability for years of under performance. A fresh start with a new complement of evaluators is just another part of the sweeping change the organization was in desperate need of.

That change now includes the GM and head coach positions. Some may suggest Shanahan make a priority out of hiring a big-name Stanley Cup winner for both jobs — think recently-fired Bruins GM Peter Chiarelli — but as Shanahan himself said in an end-of-season news conference, the job ahead in Toronto may not be for some candidates, and some candidates may not want the job ahead here.

Landing a marquee name is far less important than hiring men who understand the long road to redemption for the Leafs. It has to be about sowing with the knowledge reaping may not happen for three or four years. Anyone suggesting shortcuts or easy accelerants for that process should be fired on the spot.

The future is not now in Toronto. The sooner everyone accepts that, the better.

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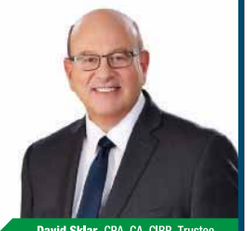

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RECIPE Frittata with Sautéed Mushrooms and Havarti

EAT LIGHT AT HOME

Rose Reisman
rosereisman.com
@rosereisman

Ready in
Prep time: 10
Cook time: 14

Ingredients
- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 tsp chopped garlic
- 3/4 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1/4 cup diced red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup egg substitute (or 2 large eggs)
- 3 egg whites
- 1/3 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach
- 1/2 cup shredded Havarti
- 2 Tbsp chopped parsley

Directions

1. Lightly coat a small nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Add the oil and set over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and red pepper and cook for 5 minutes just until mushrooms are dry. Set aside.

2. Wipe out the skillet and respray. Combine the egg substitute, egg whites and milk. Cook for 4 minutes over medium heat or until the egg begins to set. Add the onion and mushroom mixture, spinach and cheese. Cover and cook another 2 minutes, or until the cheese melts

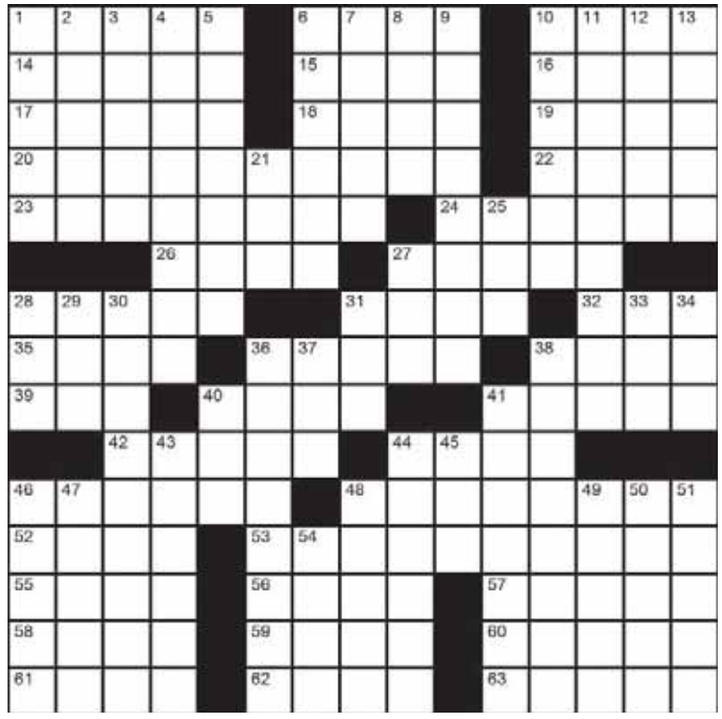
3. Slip the frittata onto a serving platter with a spatula. Cut into wedges, garnish with parsley and serve immediately

Nutrition per serving
- Calories 205
- Protein 19 g
- Carbohydrates 8 g
- Fiber 1.3 g
- Total fat 10.4 g
- Saturated fat 4.2 g
- Cholesterol 17 mg
- Sodium 320 mg

PHOTO: ROSE REISMAN

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. The _ Diet ('Caveman' diet)
6. Beach burrower
10. Repeated train noise
14. Cut
15. Dream: French
16. German industrial region
17. Collect-and-collect...
18. Above
19. 7th Greek letters
20. Product by since-1959 Canadian brand Rougemont: 2 wds.
22. Prefix to 'phobia' (Fear of heights)
23. Liquidy lawn: 2 wds.
24. Toronto's _ Phillips Square
26. Irritate
27. Nod
28. "Dracula Has _ from the Grave" (1968)
31. Closed
32. Plank parter
35. Greyish
36. Creature on a highway crossing sign
38. Homer Simpson's mom
39. Jeannie C. Riley hit: "Harper Valley _-_-_"
40. Crow cries
41. Does darning
42. AIR-ihk _-suhn (Captain of the Ottawa Senators, as per the little pronunciation key under the names of NHL players)
44. Rime
46. Tiredness cause in some
48. Toronto Blue Jays right fielder Jose
52. Rob of reels
53. They contain backstage specifications for rockers: 2 wds.
55. Kitchen appliance
56. Dickens character, with Uriah
57. Ms. Munster's
58. Had in hand
59. Never, _ _ account
60. Devil
61. Shakespeare title starter
62. Time for lunch
63. _ _ home is his castle

DOWN
1. "Absurd!"
2. "Not _ _ in hell!"
3. Jumped
4. Tea blend: 2 wds.
5. Select from a takeout menu: 2 wds.
6. "Canada AM" movie critic Richard
7. Quebec city
8. "_ plaisir!" (Gladly, in Montreal)
9. Dominican Republic music/dance style
10. Make
11. Jeff _ (Weather/sports anchor on "Canada AM")
12. Family in "Gone with the Wind" (1939)
13. Mr. Welles
21. Flier to Narita Intl. Airport
25. Painter's pride
27. "Fancy that!" [pl.]
28. Knock at the door
29. 'Capital' suffix
30. _ _ Before Serving (Carton instruction)
31. ABBA song
33. Furthermore
34. Occurred
36. Event of endurance
37. Nocturnal bird
38. The 'M' of CTV's "Canada AM"
40. Ill. city
41. Song of Australia: "Waltzing _"
43. Betters
44. Critically dwell: 2 wds.
45. 'O' of Canadian band OLP
46. Hawaiian greeting
47. Bestselling work
48. Good: Spanish
49. Actress Ms. Blair
50. Check the dress for fit: 2 wds.
51. Organizations, briefly
54. Vintner's prefix

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You want to make a useful contribution to what's going on around you but the only way you can do that is to join with other people. You can be a loner if you wish but you will get more done if you are not so aloof

Taurus April 21 - May 21
It's time to finish those tasks that should have been completed a long time ago. The Sun in your sign means your energy levels will peak over the next few days, so get on top of your workload.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Work will be the dominant theme later in the week, so make the most of your freedom to come and go as you please now. As a Gemini you like to get out and about and meet new people — so what are you waiting for?

Cancer June 22 - July 23
One of the most trying periods of the year has come to an end and you managed to survive! You may be in the mood to celebrate but don't go over the top. The planets warn you need to stay out of trouble today.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Tell everyone what they want to hear today, even if you don't believe a word of it and even if you don't believe they believe it either. You are not in the mood for arguments.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You must question everything you hear today, because the planets warn that some of the things you will be told are designed to mislead you rather than inform you.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Make your own value judgments today. What others say may be interesting but it is essential that you follow your instincts rather than follow the herd.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Quite likely you will say or do something silly today but it's no big deal. In fact it will most likely endear you to people who previously thought of you as a bit too perfect and self-controlled. Seems you're human after all!

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You will find yourself in just the right place at just the right time to do something worthwhile today. Make the most of it — it won't always be this easy.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The Sun in your fellow Earth sign of Taurus at this time of year makes all things possible, for you at least, so don't limit yourself to petty ambitions. Go for gold.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Friends may know you need assistance but they won't lift a finger to help you unless you ask them to. That may annoy you a bit but most likely it's your own fault. They've been told off before for interfering in your affairs

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will be confronted with a very tough challenge today and you will deal with it with ease. That might surprise those people who have only ever seen the softer side of your nature but there is a core of steel running through the Pisces personality.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

		5		8	6			
	4			7		1		
2							6	
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8	9						5	6
4			1					
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